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ABSTRACT

A study investigated how American learners acquire the pragmatics of Kiswahili greetings in a foreign language context. Subjects were 16 beginning, 12 intermediate, and 4 advanced students. After an initial month-long observation period, the following hypotheses were formed: (1) learners do not readily initiate greetings; and (2) most learners may respond to a greeting but may not elaborate. The hypotheses were then tested using data obtained from a series of elicitation tasks using verbal and written role-plays. For each role-play, the number of turns taken in greetings were counted. Results suggest that learners of Kiswahili lack the pragmatics of Kiswahili greetings even though they know the different forms of greetings required. Apparently, most learners regarded the language class and instructors' offices, the settings for the role-play tasks, as no different from other classes or instructors' offices and came to them with the semantic formulas and pragmatics of their native language. In addition, pragmatic performance did not always correlate with grammatical competence; learners at different levels were at different stages of pragmatic development. Further research on creating an environment more conducive to target language use, native speaker greeting behaviors, and individual differences in pragmatic performance is recommended. (MSE)

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HOW LEARNERS GREET IN KISWAHILI: A CROSS SECTIONAL SURVEY

Alwiya S. Omar

ABSTRACT

This paper investigates how American learners acquire the pragmatics of Kiswahili greetings in a foreign language context. Speakers of different languages have different ways of expressing greetings. In Kiswahili, for example, greetings are elaborate while in English they are minimal. To give an equivalent of 'Hi' to a friend or an acquaintance and continue on your way will be considered impolite in a Kiswahili speaking community.

Following the model proposed by Wolfson (1986), I observed learners' greeting behavior in Kiswahili. From this observation, I hypothesized that learners do not readily initiate greetings, and that most learners may respond to a greeting but may not elaborate. To test these hypotheses, I conducted three elicitation tasks which are role play situations (written and oral), a fill in blank questionnaire, and recording of office hour talk between students and their Kiswahili instructors. The results obtained from these elicitation tasks seem to support the hypotheses formulated in the observation period. In addition, the results show that pragmatic competence does not necessarily correspond with grammatical competence.

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INTRODUCTION

The question of pragmatic competence of second language learners has received attention recently from researchers of second language acquisition (e.g., Takahashi and Beebe, 1987; Wolfson, 1987; Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford, 1990; Hartford and Bardovi-Harlig, 1989; Schmidt and Richards, 1980, among others). All these studies show that to become an effective speaker of another language not only involves learning a new vocabulary and new rules of grammar and pronunciation, it also includes the ability to use these linguistic resources in ways that are socially appropriate. Some of these studies, notably Takahashi and Beebe, and Schmidt and Richards, also show that learners tend to transfer sociocultural communicative aspects of their first language in performing speech acts of the second language that they are learning. Therefore, nonnative speakers who are grammatically proficient in the target language may be differentiated from native speakers by their lack of pragmatic competence of the target language and/or by their tendency to transfer the pragmatics of their first language into the other language.

Most of these studies have focused on the pragmatic competence of English language learners. Hartford and Bardovi-Harlig (1989) demonstrate that linguistic and pragmatic competence develop differentially in nonnative speakers. They draw their examples from closings of academic advising sessions involving native and proficient nonnative speakers of English. They conclude that nonnative speakers often do not know or follow the context specific constraints of closings in institutional discourse. In another paper Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford (1990), show that non-native speakers are generally unsuccessful in negotiating status-challenging speech acts such as suggestions because they lack context-specific pragmatic competence involving the use, kind, and number of status preserving strategies as well as knowledge of appropriate form and content.

Takahashi and Beebe (1987) examine the pragmatic competence of Japanese learners of English as compared with Americans by looking at how refusals are made. They have shown that pragmatic transfer exists in both the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and English as a Second Language (ESL) contexts, and at both the lower and higher proficiency levels. They

point out that one of the major problems for ESL students in English-speaking countries is the art of saying 'no'. The inability to say no clearly and politely, though not directly, has led many nonnative speakers to offend their interlocutors.

Yoder (1989) examines the greeting behavior of native speakers and nonnative learners of English and finds that nonnative speakers lack in their pragmatic competence. Sometimes, learners exhibit transfer of training by using the same kind of greeting formula which was apparently taught in class, while native speakers of English have many other options of responding to a greeting. Yoder cites the following example of a student who usually responds to her greeting in the same mechanical way:

1. **A**: How are you?

   B: Fine. Thanks. And you?

Greetings in Kiswahili

The purpose of the present study is to examine how native speakers of English acquire the pragmatics of greetings in Kiswahili (a Bantu language spoken in East Africa) in a foreign language environment. I will begin the paper by providing a description of greetings in Kiswahili.

Greetings are quite elaborate in a Kiswahili speaking community. A minimum of five turns is normally heard at the beginning of an interaction. (I use 'turn' to stand for every time a participant in a conversation speaks.) Anything fewer than five turns, among status equal participants, may be due to one or both participants being indifferent, unfriendly, or impolite. In Kiswahili, a greeting with a minimum of five turns (or four greeting sequences - greetings and their responses), as dialogue 2 shows, is conducive for further conversation between the interlocutors.

2. 1. **A**: Hujambo? *How are you?*
   2. **B**: Sijambo. Na wewe je? *I'm fine. How about you?*
   3. **A**: Sijambo. Habari? *I'm fine. What news?*
   4. **B**: Nzuri. Zako je? *Good. And yours?*
   5. **A**: Nzuri. Alhamdulillah. *Good. Praise be to God.*

B in the following example may appear unfriendly because he structures the conversation in such a way that further conversation with **A** is not encouraged. This is achieved by not elaborating on **A**'s greetings.

3. 1. **A**: Hujambo? *How are you?*
   2. **B**: Sijambo. *I'm fine.*
   3. **A**: Habari? *What news?*
   4. **B**: Nzuri. *Good.*

In dialogue 4 below, **A** initiates a greeting but is not keen on engaging in a conversation with **B**. Therefore, he does not elaborate on **B**'s second form of greeting. Dialogue 4, like dialogue 3, above is not conducive for further conversation between **A** and **B**.

4. 1. **A**: Hujambo? *How are you?*
   2. **B**: Sijambo. Habari? *I'm fine. What's new?*
   3. **A**: Nzuri. *Good.*

The following are data from native speaker interaction obtained from a Television Zanzibar video play. Greetings in most of the situations are more than five turns. Dialogue 5, a typical kind of greeting in a Kiswahili speaking community, is between two female friends. It consists of ten turns, or seven greeting sequences, with many elaborations. It is common for interlocutors to ask about family members as we see in turns 4 , 5 and 6. It is common, also, to repeat the same form of greeting in a slightly different way as we see in turns 1 and 3. Most learners of Kiswahili, as we will see later, are put off by this. They probably think that it is redundant to ask the same thing again and they usually do not respond to the second form. Towards the end of a greeting, there is usually another round of asking about each others' health

as we see in turn 7.

5. A woman visiting a friend who has been sick: two female friends. (play)

1. Woman:	Habari za asubuhi?	*News of the morning?*
2. Friend:	Nzuri.	*Fine.*
3. Woman:	Habari za hapa?	*News of here?*
4. Friend:	Salama. Shemeji hajambo?	*Fine. How's brother in law?*
5. Woman:	Hajambo. Na nyinyi hamjambo?	*He's fine. How about you all?*
6. Friend:	Hatujambo. Watoto hawajambo?	*We are fine. And the children?*
7. Woman:	Hawajambo. Wewe je?	*They are fine. And you?*
8. Friend:	Mimi sijambo.	*I'm fine.*
9. Woman:	Unaendelea vizuri?	*Are you getting on fine.*
10. Friend:	Vizuri. Alhamdulillah.	*Fine. Praise be to god.*

The same kind of greeting pattern is seen in the following situation between two male friends: Greeting formulas in lines 4 to 7 are repeated in a slightlly different way in lines 11 and 12.

6. A is visiting B: two male friends. (play)

1. **A:**	Hodi. Hodi.	*Knock. Knock.*
2. **B:**	Nani mwenzangu?	*Who is it?*
3. **A:**	Mimi, Bwana.	*Me bwana* [1]
4. **B:**	Karibu bwana. Oho! Nini hali?	*Welcome bwana. What condition?*
5. **A:**	Nzuri.	*Good.*
6. **B:**	Nini khabari?	*What news?*
7. **A:**	Salama. Hujambo?	*Peaceful. How are you?*
8. **B:**	Sijambo.	*I'm fine.*
9. **A:**	Shemeji hajambo?	*Is sister in law fine? (asking about B's wife).*
10. **B:**	Hajambo. Naona tumepata bahati leo.	*She's fine. I see we are lucky today.*
11. **A:**	Naam. Nini khabari?	*Yes. What news?*
12. **B:**	Kheri.	*Peaceful.*

People who see each other every day usually keep to 5 or 6 turns as seen in situation 7 between husband and wife, and in situation 8 between mother and son.

7. Home from work: husband and wife. (play)

1. Husband:	Habari za hapa?	*News of here?*
2. Wife:	Salama. Habari za huko kazini?	*Fine. News of work?*
3. Husband:	Alhamdulillah. Nzuri. Hujambo?	*Thank God. Good. How are you?*
4. Wife:	Sijambo. Wewe je?	*I'm fine. And you?*
5. Husband:	Sijambo. Mama vipi? Hajambo?	*I'm fine. How about mother? Is she fine?*
6. Wife:	Hajambo.	*She's fine.*

8. Son greeting his mother. (play)

1. Son:	Shikamoo mama.	*I hold your legs mother.(Idiomatically)*
2. Mother:	Marahaba. Hujambo?	*Allright. How are you?*
3. Son:	Sijambo. Habari za hapa?	*I'm fine. News of here?*
4. Mother:	Nzuri.	*Good.*
5. Son:	Hali yako?	*Your condition?*
6. Mother:	Salama.	*Peaceful.*

These forms of greetings may appear strange to non-native speakers of Kiswahili. They are, however, quite normal to native speakers who would be offended in situations where there is no elaboration or response to their greetings. They might experience culture shock when in an English speaking community as I did once when I telephoned an American friend of mine; I had been out of town for a few days. This is a reconstructed dialogue of what transpired between us.

9. Calling a friend.(a reconstructed dialogue)

1. Me: Hello.
2. Friend: Hello.
3. Me: How are you?
4. Friend: I'm doing a take home exam. I can't talk now.
5. Me: Oh, I just wanted to say hi.
6. Friend: How was your trip?
7. Me: Fine. Good luck with your exam. Bye.

I was offended: My initial reaction was that I was not going to telephone my friend again. She did not respond to my greeting. Instead she said she could not talk. Later on, however, I realized that I had no reason to be offended. To my friend, her response was quite legitimate. She was very busy and she could not engage in a lengthy conversation. I, on the other hand, was expecting Kiswahili pragmatics with English speech acts. I would like to point out, here, that tensions may occur between native speakers of Kiswahili as well, especially, when there is a clash of identities or when the status of one of the interlocutors is questioned as the following anecdote from personal experience shows. Mosi in this anecdote is a family friend who is about eight years older than I am. We had not seen each other for several years.

10. Meeting a family friend at a social activity in Zanzibar. (a reconstructed dialogue)

1. Me:	Hujambo?	*How are you?*
2. Mosi:	Unaniamkia 'hujambo' kwani mimi sawa nawe?	*You greet me 'hujambo' Am I the same age as you?*
3. Me:	Oh... Msalkheri.	*Oh.. Good evening.*
4. Mosi:	Msalkheri. Habari za safari?	*Good evening. News of your trip?*

'Hujambo', when used as the first turn of a greeting, indentifies people as being of the same age or, if there is an age difference, then the older person may use 'hujambo' as some kind of summons or attention getter to get a younger person to greet properly. The use of greetings as

summons was pointed out by Schegloff (1968). Mosi, in the above example, did not accept the status equal identity I had adopted and she rejected my greeting with the implication that I should greet her properly, which I did.

Thirty two American learners of Kiswahili enrolled at Indiana University participated in this research - 16 beginners and 16 non-beginners (4 advanced and 12 intermediate). Beginning students were in their first semester of Kiswahili and the students in the other group had taken more than two semesters. I started the study with an observation period of one month. Then I formulated two hypotheses which I tested by using data elicited from role plays, office hour conversation, and a dialogue questionnaire.

OSERVATION AND FORMULATION OF HYPOTHESES

Method

In this experiment, I followed the research methodology proposed by Wolfson (1986): *Observe -- Formulate hypotheses -- Test hypotheses by the use of elicitation tasks.* Wolfson proposes this procedure in order to prevent researchers from being misled by their native speaker intuitions and subsequently constructing inappropriate hypotheses. Learners were observed for one month. I observed student/student interactions and student/teacher interactions before the beginning of class. Notes were taken immediately if there was time to do so. Otherwise, note taking was usually done at the end of class sessions.

Results

The following is a sample of greetings obtained from these observations. The same kind of performance was observed from beginning and non beginning students.

11. Student responds to the first form of greeting but not the second.

1. T: Hujambo?	*How are you?*
2. St: Sijambo.	*I'm fine.*
3. T: Habari?	*News?*
4. St: (no reply)	

12. Student responds to both forms of greeting but does not elaborate.

1. T:	Hujambo X?	*How are you X?*
2. St:	Sijambo.	*I'm fine.*
3. T:	Habari?	*News?*
4. St:	Nzuri.	*Good*

13. Individualistic reply even though a greeting would be directed to several students.

1. T:	Hamjambo?	*How are you (pl)?*
2. St1:	Sijambo.	*I'm fine. (but hatujambo 'we're fine' would be appropriate.)*
3. St2.	(no reply)	

14. A group of students in class. Teacher enters. One student greets. Teacher replies and elaborates by including everybody. Nobody answers back.

1. St:	Hujambo?	*How are you?*
2. T:	Sijambo. Habari zenu?	*I'm fine. Your news (pl)?*
3. St:	(no reply)	

15. Student greeting another student who does not respond.

1. St1:	Hujambo?	*How are you?*
2. St2:	(no reply)	
3. St1:	Mvua nyingi.	*A lot of rain.*
4. St2:	(no response)	

From these notes I was able to formulate two hypotheses. First, learners do not readily initiate greetings. Second, most learners may respond to a greeting but may not elaborate. I tested the hypotheses formulated above by using data obtained from a series of elicitation tasks which were conducted in phase two of the study.

ELICITATION TASK 1: VERBAL AND WRITTEN ROLE PLAYS

Method

Role plays of ten invented situations which required obligatory greetings and one distractor were used. This elicitation task was done in two stages in the form of verbal role plays and written role plays. Some of these situations are:

16. Siku moja, wakati unakwenda darasani unakutana na rafiki yako mtanzania. Mlionana mwisho wiki iliyopita. (You are walking to class one day and you meet a Tanzanian friend of yours. You have not seen each other since the week before).

17. Kuna 'hodi' mlangoni. Rafiki yake baba yako amekuja kumwona baba yako ambaye bado hajarudi kutoka kazini kwake. (There is a knock on the door. Your father's old friend has come to visit. Your father is not home from work yet).

In the verbal role plays, learners at each level were grouped in pairs and a situation was given to each pair. After a few minutes of preparation, the participants were asked to act out their roles verbally. Initially, the interactions were video taped but because learners felt uncomfortable being video taped, taping was switched to audio. Video taping would have been a more useful way of collecting data because it would have been possible to analyze learners' body movements and gestures as well as facial expressions accompanying their conversations. The conversations were transcribed and the number of turns were counted. Each situation was role played twice at each level and the average number of turns was calculated. In the written role plays, each participant was given all the ten situations in the form of a questionnaire and were asked to write down a conversation between the participants in each situation.

Results

Table 1 shows the number of turns in greetings in each of the nine situations in the verbal role plays. Comparing the performance of the learners in Table1, it would appear that there is little difference in the performance of beginning students and that of advanced/intermediate students.

Table 1

Average number of turns in greetings for all learners (verbal role plays).

Situation:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Adv/Int:	3.5	NA[a]	2.5	4	2.5	3.5	4	5.5	3.5	3
Begin:	4.5	NA	1.5	3	2.5	4	3.5	4	3.5	2.5

[a] NA = Not applicable (distractor)

All cases of greetings (except situation 8) consist of fewer than 5 turns - the number of turns required to encourage further conversations. The example role play between advanced learners appears to be much like that of native speakers as shown in dialogue 18 below.

18. Talking to father's friend (elicited data)

1.	**A**:	Hodi. Hodi.	*Knock. Knock.*
2.	**B**:	Karibu.	*Welcome.*
3.	**A**:	Hujambo?	*How are you?*
4.	**B**:	Sijambo. Na wewe je?	*I'm fine. How about you?*
5.	**A**:	Sijambo. Na Habari zako?	*I'm fine. Your news?*
6.	**B**:	Nzuri. Na wewe?	*Good. And yours?*
7.	**A**:	Nzuri. Habari za baba yako?	*Good. News of your father?*
8.	**B**:	Nzuri lakini ana kazi nyingi.	*Good but he has a lot of work.*

One thing is missing, though. The conversation would seem to be between status equals in the way it is structured. **A** who is the friend of **B**'s father is definitely older than **B**, but **B** does not greet **A** with 'shikamoo' the greeting formula which shows respect. Normally, **A** would be offended. In some cases **A** might implicitly or explicitly ask **B** to greet him respectfully, as was the case between Mosi and me in dialogue 10. At the end of the conversation, **B** acts non-native like by waving her hand instead of responding to goodbye verbally. In real life, **A** will go away with the impression that **B** does not have good manners - she not only does not greet

respectfully, but she also does not care to say goodbye.

In the written questionnaires, beginning students seem to have used a greater number of turns for greetings than did advanced/intermediate students. Table 2 shows that beginning students performed more turns for Situations 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9 and 10 than intermediate/advanced students. This observation would appear to support Takahashi and Beebe's (1987) claim that advanced learners tend to perform more pragmatic errors than less advanced learners. Usually, advanced learners' greater command of the target language allows them to use more language

Table 2

Average number of turns in greetings for all learners (written role plays).

Situation:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Adv/Int:	3.7	NA	1.1	2.6	0.8	2.9	1.6	1.7	2.0	1.4
Begin:	5.5	NA	2.1	2.4	2.1	4.0	2.7	1.6	2.6	2.4

which in turn provides them with more opportunities to employ L_1 influenced semantic formulas on L_2 speech acts. But that could not be the case here because the advanced learners, in fact, used less language than did beginning learners in the greeting part of the situations of the written role plays. It is possible that beginning students were still influenced by training. Greetings are usually taught at the beginning of the course and at the time of data collection for the role plays, the beginning students had just started learning the language and consequently, could write more greeting formulas than anything else in the situation in question. Therefore, it is possible that beginning students were still influenced by the learning effect while the advanced/intermediate students were not.

The results obtained from the written and verbal role plays seem to support the two hypotheses formulated during the observation period. Learners do not readily initiate greetings. As we can see in Table 3, several learners, mostly advanced, did not include greetings in the written role plays. In most cases, greetings were fewer than five turns. This supports the

Table 3

Number of students who did not include greetings in the written role plays.

Situation:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Adv/Int:	-	NA	4	-	3	-	2	3	1	1
Begin:	-	NA	-	-	1	-	-	2	-	-

second hypothesis that learners do not elaborate on greetings. The hypotheses were further tested by the use of elicited data obtained from the interaction between the learners and their Kiswahili instructors during office hour consultations.

ELICITATION TASK 2: OFFICE HOURS

Method

Recording of office hour conversation. In this task, students were asked to go to the office of their instructors to talk about a project that they were expected to present in class later on. Two instructors participated in this task. Learners scheduled an appointment with their respective instructors. A tape recorder was kept on the desk of the instructor and at the appointed time, the instructor would push the record button. The problem with this elicitation task is that it was not always possible to record the beginning part of a greeting and the instructor had to jot down very quickly the part that could not be recorded. This part of the study was done about a month after the written and the verbal role plays were elicited. Only beginning and intermediate learners were available for this part of the project.

Results

I regard the data obtained from the office hours as more authentic than the data obtained from role play elicitation tasks because the office situation was not an imaginary one. The learners went there to see their instructors for a reason. From these data, I observed different degrees of pragmatic perfomance which I put in three groups. One group of students showed lack of understanding or initial resistance to speaking in Kiswahili; another group cut short the greeting

by employing different strategies such as not elaborating, going straight to the main topic of the meeting, or giving inappropriate responses; and a third group showed more native like behavior. This variability in pragmatic competence, also found by Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford (in press), does not seem to correlate with class level or gender. In each of the three groups identified, there are male and female learners from both the beginning and intermediate classes.

19 and 20 are sample data for the first group of students. The student in 19 shows initial resistance to speaking in Kiswahili and the one in 20 shows lack of understanding.

19. Female beginning student enters office and immediately tarts speaking in English. She does not initiate a greeting and does not wait to be greeted by the instructor. Possibly, she is negotiating on the language that she would like to use, in this case English.

St: Are we supposed to.....	
T: Habari?	*News?*
St: Nzuri. Are we supposed to....	*Good.*
T: Sema Kiswahili.	*Speak in Kiswahili.*
St: Haya	*OK*
T: Unataka kuzungumza nini?	*What do you want to talk about?*

This student would appear very rude to a native speaker of Kiswahili. The student's behavior apparently discouraged the teacher from continuing with more forms of greeting.

20. Male intermediate student shows lack of understanding.

T:	Habari za kazi?	*News of work?*
St:	(no reply)	
T:	Habari za kazi?	*News of work?*
St:	Unauliza?	*You are asking?*
T:	Nasema habari za kazi? Nzuri?	*I'm saying News of work? Good?*
St:	Ndiyo, nzuri.	*Yes, good*

The data in 21, 22 and 23 represent the second group of students who cut short the greeting by employing different strategies.

21. Female intermediate student employs all three strategies.

T:	Habari za kazi?	*News of work?*
St:	Ah...Ah... Si mbaya.	*Not bad.*
T:	Si mbaya? Unatoka darasani?	*Not bad? Are you coming from class?*
St:	A a a. Nataka kuzungumza kuhusu.	*No. I want to talk about.....*

This student cut short the greeting by not elaborating, by immediately switching to the main purpose of her coming to the office, and also by not using the approriate reply to news, which is always 'good' or 'good but.....' . She said 'not bad', instead.

22. Female beginning student cut short the greeting by responding inappropriately

T:	Habari?	*News?*
St:	Si zuri.	*Not good*
T:	Kwanini?	*Why?*
St:	Ninakuwa umwa.	*I am sick.*
T:	Unaumwa? Unaumwa na nini?	*You are sick? You are sick of what?(literally)*
St:	Flu.	

Again the greeting was cut short because the student did not follow the normal greeting procedure.

23. Male beginning student responds to the first form of greeting but does not elaborate on it.

T:	Habari?	*News?*
St:	Nzuri.	*Good.*
T:	Habari gani?	*What news?*
St:	(no reply)	

The student does not reply to the teacher's second form of greeting. This lack of response can not be due to lack of comprehension because the instructor uses a similar kind of greeting as the previous one.

The data in 24 to 26 represent students who behave more native like by showing some elaboration, and as in the case of 26, by using other possible options.

24. Female beginning student starts to greet, elaborates, and responds to all forms of greetings used.

St: Habari?	*News?*
T: Nzuri. Hujambo?	*Good. How are you?*
St: Sijambo. Na wewe je?	*I'm fine. And you?*
T: Sijambo. Habari za kazi?	*News of work?*
St: Nzuri.	*Good.*

25. Female begining student responds correctly and elaborates.

T: Karibu.	*Come in.*
St: Asante.	*Thanks.*
T: Habari?	*News?*
St: Nzuri.	*Good.*
T: Habari zako?	*Your news?*
St: Nzuri. Na wewe je?	*Fine. And you?*
T: Nzuri.	*Good.*
St: Ninataka kuzungumza...	*I want to talk.....*

Even though this student starts talking about the main purpose of the visit she does not sound abrupt because the minimum turns of greeting have already been established

26. Male beginning student gives correct responses as well as elaborates on a greeting

T: Habari?	*News?*
St: Nzuri. Na wewe je?	*Good. And you?*
T: Mzima. Habari za leo?	*Fine. News of today?*
St: Salama.	*Peaceful.*

The student's use of variable responses to 'habari' which are 'nzuri' and 'salama' adds to the success of the greeting.

Why do most learners perform minimal greetings? There are two possibilities. Either they do not know how to formulate an appropriate greeting turn or they lack in their pragmatic

competence. In order to test whether they know their turns at all, I gave a fill in questionnaire test as the third elicitation task.

ELICITATION TASK 3: DIALOGUE QUESTIONNAIRE

Method

In the dialogue questionnaire task, students were tested on their ability to recognize a greeting sequence, and whether or not they can provide an appropriate form of a greeting in a sequence that they identified. 24 students (15 beginning and 9 intermediate) were given a dialogue of a situation which had every other line missing (see appendix 2). The dialogue consisted of seven greeting sequences (see Table 4) two of which are reproduced below.

27. Sequence 1.

Mama: Habari za Hapa?	*Mother: News of here?*
Wewe: Nzuri.	*You: Good.*

28. Sequence 2.

Wewe: Shikamoo.	*You: Shikamoo (respectful form)*
Mama: Marahaba.	*Mother: Allright.*

Results

Two students, one beginning and another intermediate, identified all the greeting sequences and filled in correct forms. It is these two students who were able to identify the respectful nature of greeting sequence 2 and used the form shikamoo. All the rest did not. All the learners recognized and provided the correct greeting forms for greeting sequence 1. For the rest of the greeting sequences, the learners show different degrees of performance which do not correlate with class level. Table 4 shows the learners' performance. With the exception of greeting sequence 2 and greeting sequence 7, most learners were able to identify the greeting sequences and used the correct forms. This task shows that learners know the turns involved in a greeting and in situations where they are forced to greet, they will greet, appropriately in most cases. It is in every day situations, whether imaginary (role plays) or real (as when meeting teachers and students in offices or class rooms), that most learners fail to engage in lengthy greetings.

Table 4

Fill in questionnaire. Performance in %:

	Recognize greeting		Did not recognize
Greeting sequence	Right form	Wrong form	greeting
1. Habari za hapa?/Nzuri.	100%	0%	0%
2. Shikamoo./Marahaba.	8.4	20.8	70.8
3. Hujambo?/Sijambo.	91.6	4.2	4.2
4. Baba hajambo?/Hajambo.	62.5	29.2	8.3
5. Dada hawajambo?/hawajambo.	79.2	0	16.6
6. Habari za masomo?/Nzuri.	62.5	20.9	16.6
7. Habari za safari?/Nzuri.	29.2	4.2	66.6

CONCLUSION

The results of this experiment show that learners of Kiswahili seem to lack the pragmatics of Kiswahili greetings, even though, in most cases, they know the different forms of greetings required. The setting, which according to Hymes (1972), 'refers to the time and place of a speech act and, in general, to the physical circumstances', has some influence on the pragmatic performance of the learners. Apparently, most learners of Kiswahili regard the Kiswahili language class and their instructors' offices as being no different from any of their other classes or their other instructors' offices, and therefore, they come to these places with semantic formulas and pragmatics of their native language. This is not surprising since these learners are learning the language in a foreign language environment in which their contact with native speakers of Kiswahili is limited to their instructors in the language classes only. How to create a setting which would fit the target language environment is out of scope of this paper. It is, however, a possible topic for a pedagogical research.

Moreover, I have observed that pragmatic performance does not often correlate with

grammatical competence. Individual learners, beginning as well as intermediate, are at different stages of pragmatic development. There are some beginning students who performed well while some intermediate students performed badly in the same tasks and vice versa. Accounting for these differences will be the subject of another project for which I will need more naturalistic data of the learners, both formal as well as informal. Getting naturalistic data in terms of participant observation will not be easy in a foreign language context. Therefore, I might need to extend the study to include learners of Kiswahili in the target language environment. Since greetings are important speech acts in Kiswahili speaking communities, more research needs to be done on the greeting behaviors of native speakers in different situation types, and the kind of cultural meanings which are attached to these speech acts. The results of such a study will be a useful resource for second language learners of Kiswahili who need to be made aware of the importance of greetings in a Kiswahili speaking community. Nonnative speakers of Kiswahili need to create environments which would facilitate making friends thereby getting opportunities which would enable them to learn the language as well as its sociocultural values. Otherwise, learners would create a 'viscious circle', as pointed out by Wolfson (1988), which would not help them in acquiring pragmatic competence of the target language.

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NOTES

[1] The word bwana has multiple meanings depending on the situation in which it is used. It can mean *Mister* if used before a proper name (Bwana Juma *Mr. Juma*); it can mean *sir* if used in a formal situation addressing a man of higher status; it can mean *husband* when asking about a friend's husband; or it can mean *friend* if used informally addressing a female or male friend. It is this last meaning that is used in dialogue 6.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Situations for role plays - both written and verbal

1. Siku moja wakati unakwenda darasani unakutana na rafiki yako Mtanzania. Mlionana mwisho, wiki iliyopita. (*You are walking to class one day and you meet a Tanzanian friend of yours. You have not seen each other since the week before).*

2. Umemtembelea rafiki yako Mtanzania nyumbani kwake. Amekupa chai na keki. Sasa unataka kuondoka. (*You 've visited a Tanzanian friend of yours at his/her place. Now its time for you to leave).*

3. Uko sokoni, Dar-es-salaam, Tanzania. Unataka kununua mahindi na matunda. Bibi mwuzaji anauza bei ghali. (*You are at the market in Dar-es-salaam, Tanzania. You want to buy fruits and corn. The market woman asks for high prices).*

4. Rafiki yako Mtanzania amekupigia simu. Yuko hapa hapa mjini. Uko katika kufanya mtihani wa nyumbani. *(A Tanzanian friend of yours calls you over the phone (local call). You are in the midst of doing a take home exam).*

5. Unaumwa wakati uko Zanzibar. Unakwenda kumwona daktari. *(You fall sick while visiting in Zanzibar. You go to see a doctor).*

6. Wakati unakwenda maktaba unakutana na mwalimu wako wa Kiswahili. Amemaliza kufundisha na sasa anakwenda maktaba pia. *(On your way to the library you meet your Kiswahili instructor. S/he has just finished teaching and is now going to the library).*

7. Rafiki yako hakuja darasani leo. Mpigie simu umsikilize. *(Your friend didn't come to class today. Call him/her to check what was wrong).*

8. Kuna 'hodi' mlangoni. rafiki yake baba yako amekuja kumwona baba yako ambaye bado hakurudi kazini kwake. *(There is a knock on the door. Your father's old friend has come to visit. Your father's not home from work yet).*

9. Mpigie simu mwalimu wako wa Kiswahili umwambie kwamba hutaweza kwenda darasani kesho. *(Telephone your Kiswahili instructor and inform him/her that you will not be able to go to class the next day).*

10. Umepotea katika mji wa Dar-es-salaam. Unataka kwenda posta. Unamwuliza mtu unayemwona akuelekeze njia. Mtu huyo anakwenda posta pia. *(You are lost in Dar-es-salaam. You want to go to the post office. You are ask the first person you see for directions. S/he is also going to the post office).*

Appendix 2.

Fill in questionnaire

Mama yako amekuja kukutembelea. Anatoka mji mwengine ambako anaishi pamoja na baba na dada aako wawili. Hamjaonana siku nyingi. Andika mazungumzo baina yenu. (*Your mother has come to visit you. She lives in another town with your dad and two sisters. You haven't seen her for a long time).*

Mama: Hodi. Hodi *Knock. Knock.*

Wewe: Karibu *Welcome*

Mama: Asante. Habari za hapa? *Thanks. News of here?*

Wewe: Nzuri. Shikamoo. *Good. Shikamoo. (a respectful form of greeting).*

Mama: Marahaba. Hujambo? *Allright. How are you?*

Wewe: Sijambo. Baba hajambo? *I'm fine. How's dad?*

Mama: Hajambo. Alhamdulillah. Anafanya kazi nyingi siku hizi. Anakupa salamu na dada zako pia. *He's fine. Thank God. He's very busy these days. He sends you his regards and your sisters too.*

Wewe: Asante. Dada hawajambo? *Thanks. How are my sisters?*

Mama: Hawajambo. Nini habari za masomo? *They're fine. News of your studies?*

Wewe: Nzuri. Habari za safari? *Good. News of your trip?*

Mama: Nzuri. Nilisafiri muda wa saa mbili tu. Leo nataka kukupikia chakula cha jioni. Unataka kula nini? *Good. I traveled for two hours. I want to cook for you today. What would you like to have?*

Wewe: _____

Mama: Haya. Twende dukani kwanza. *OK. Let's go to the store frst.*

Mama = Mother; Wewe = You; Correct answers underlined.

Appendix 16

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March 29, 1991